MONTANA PUBLIC EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT ADMINISTRATION

MPERA Online Payroll Reporting

September 2002

MPERA Online Payroll Reporting Guide

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Introduction

Beginning January 2002, the MPERA implemented the Web Reporting application through the Internet. This is a new way for agencies reporting to the MPERA to report payrolls.

Employers not currently reporting through the MPERA Online (Web Reporting) are encouraged to investigate the possibility of doing so. Contact the Montana Public Employee Retirement Administration (406) 444-3154 or toll free 877-275-7372 for more information. If you have specific questions about Web Reporting, contact Mary Popp or Roxanne Minnehan at this same phone number.

Agencies will need access to the Internet to use the MPERA Web Reporting application. To start MPERA Online, agencies will need Microsoft Internet Explorer (version 5.0 or higher).

The Online Payroll Reporting information in this Employer Reporting Handbook contains general information for all agencies. There is also specific information in the Transferring the Payroll Report (Section III) for each of the three methods of payroll reporting. Use the box below to determine your agencies method of payroll reporting and the specific page in Section III which provides information for your payroll reporting method.

Where to find specific instructions to transfer the payroll report for the three payroll reporting methods:

1. **Electronic File Transfer - For agencies who report using a diskette or FTP, instructions begin on page I-4-16.**

2. **Copy from Previous Report Period - For agencies who report using a hard copy turnaround document, instructions begin on page I-4-22.**

3. **Create New Report Period - For new agencies who have never submitted a payroll report to the MPERA. You will use these instructions only for the first time you report. Instructions begin on page I-4-23.**


Section I: Accessing/Exiting the System

System Startup

To start MPERA Online, start Microsoft Internet Explorer (version 5.0 or higher). At the address line, type in https://mpera.doa.state.mt.us/MPERA.htm and press the Enter key. Note: the MPERA.htm in the Internet address above is case sensitive and must read MPERA.htm exactly. You can also start MPERA Online from the link on the MPERA Web Site. At the address line, type in http://www.discoveringmontana.com/doa/perb Select the **Employer Web Reporting** link on the MPERA Home Page.

At the address line, type in:

https://mpera.doa. state.mt.us/MPERA. htm

This will bring up the following Security Alert Window.

Hint: Bookmark the web site address (e.g., place it in your "favorites" in your address book).
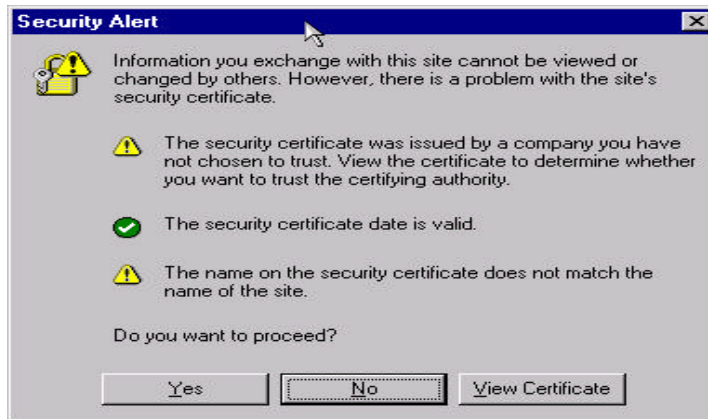
Accept the Security Certificate by selecting the **Yes** button.

After accepting the Security Alert, employers will enter the MPERA Online application by selecting the **Employer button.**
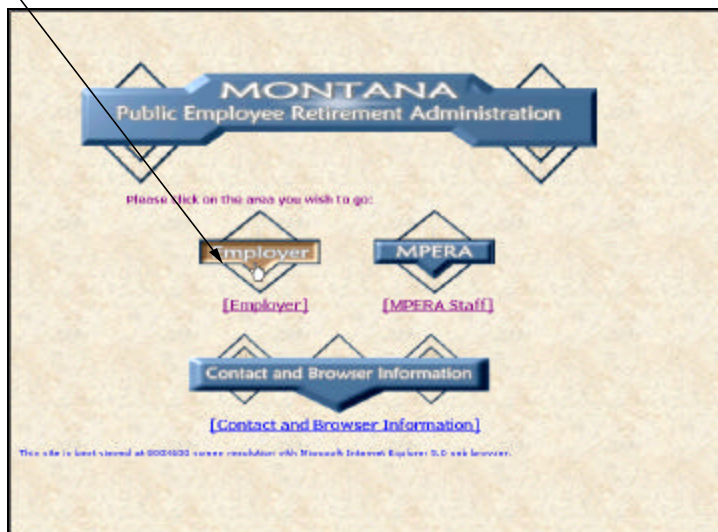
Internet Explorer Troubleshooting

If you are having trouble connecting and know you have Internet Explorer 5.0 or higher, you may need to reconfigure your Internet Explorer.

To reconfigure your Internet Explorer, select the **Contact and Browser Information button** (see screen at bottom of page I-4-10). Follow the instructions that appear.

If you do not know what version of Internet Explorer you have, open Internet Explorer, then left click on HELP on the tool bar and select "About Internet Explorer. This will show you which version you currently have installed.

Security Warnings

You may or may not get this or other security warning screens depending on your computer configuration. To bypass these screens select **Yes.**
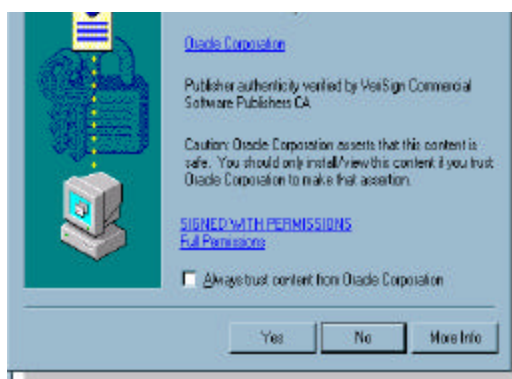
User Password

Login with the Username and password assigned by the MPERA. You must change this password upon initial login. (See page I-4-13.)

Your application is now started and the MPERA Login screen will be displayed. Based on how you report to the MPERA, you will be assigned a unique Username and a Password to get started. Insert this Username and Password, then select **Login**.


Three unsuccessful attempts to enter your password will lock you out. You will need to call Linda Miller at the MPERA. Phone (406) 444-3154 or toll free 1-877-275-7372 to have your password reset.

Note: Your password should be immediately changed after it has been reset. See Page I-4-13 for information on changing the User Password.

The **Change Contact Information** screen will be displayed for you to update information as needed. This screen will be displayed every 60 - 90 days to prompt you to update the information. When this screen is displayed and you have made any necessary updates, select **OK**.

Upon successful login, the **MPERA Online main working** screen will be displayed.

Based on the User-name, the MPERA Online Main working screen will be displayed.
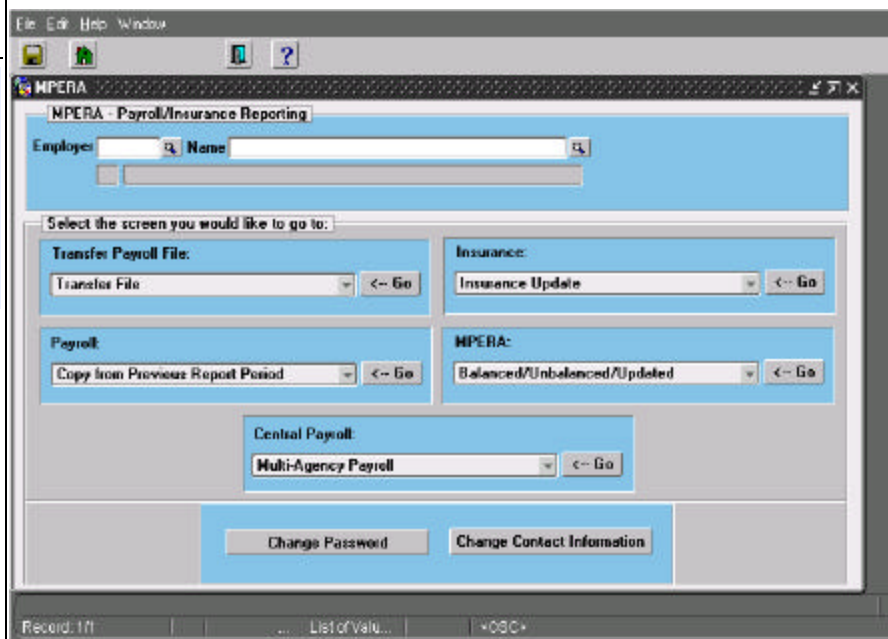
System Exit

To exit MPERA Online, any of the following exit options can be used.

Toolbar Icons - Select the open door icon on the tool bar, or select the "X" on the Window Header bar:
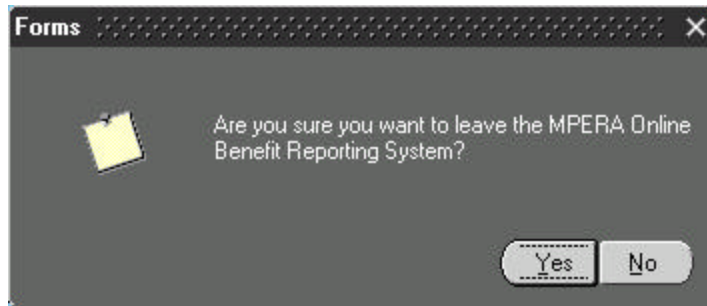
Menu Option - To exit from the menu, select the **File** drop-down menu and select **Exit**.

Final Exit Prompt

EXIT Final Prompt

When MPERA Online is ready for closure, the following final prompt will be presented. Select **Yes** to exit, or if closure was initiated by mistake, select **No**. If you select "Yes," you may then close the window when the blank window appears.
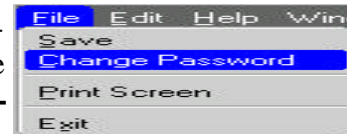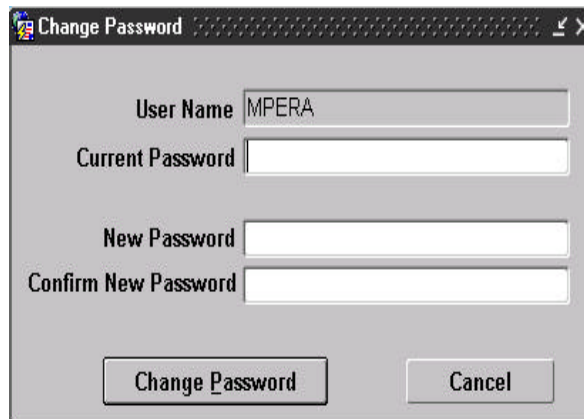

To Change Password

Changing User Password

To change your password, you may select the **Change Password** tab at the bottom of the MPERA Online main working screen.

You may also click on the **File** drop-down menu on the MPERA Online Working Screen. Select **Change Password** .

The Change Password window will then be displayed. On the Change Password window enter your current password, your new password, and then confirm your new password by typing it again. When you have changed your password, select **Change Password**, or press the Enter key.

Section II: System Operation

MPERA Online provides a variety of tools. Two of the tool bars available for your use are:

<u>Menu Bar:</u>

Menu Bar

File Edit Help Window

Located at the top of the screen, the menu bar provides access to MPERA Online functions. The tables on the next page explain the applicable processes.

<u>Tool Bar (Standard):</u>

File Edit Help Window

**Tool Bar
(Standard)**

Located immediately below the Menu Bar, the Tool Bar provides windows standard access to frequently used MPERA Online functions. Items on the Tool Bar are activated by selecting the picture (Icon) representing the function.

Select this item to save the record entry.

Select this item to return to the MPERA online main working screen.

Select this item to exit the system.

Table 1 - File Menu

Function	Description	MPERA Menu Option	Tool Bar Button
Save	Saves the record entry.	File / Save	
Change Password	Provides access to the change password function for the system	File / Change Password	N / A
Print Screen	Sends an image of the screen to a local printer.	File / Print	N / A
Exit	Provides an option of exiting the system. Will also cancel enter-query mode.	File / Exit	

Table 2 - Help Menu

Function	Description	MPERA Menu Option	Tool Bar or (Functional) Button
Help	**This function has not been developed yet, and, therefore is not available.**	Help / Help	
Keyboard Help	Provides a list of keyboard actions that can be used to perform other Menu Bar and Tool Bar functions.	Help / Keyboard Help	N / A
Allowable Values	Provides access to values that are allowable for an individual field.	Help / List Allowable Values	
About	Provides a window of basic system information regarding the MPERA system and current screen.	Help / About	N / A
Display Query Error	Provides a message box with the contents of a system error message. Can only be accessed if a fatal error has been received on a query.	Help / Display Query Error	N / A

Section III: Transferring the Payroll Report

Once you have successfully logged into MPERA Online as explained in Section I, the MPERA Online main working screen will be displayed. When you enter your employer number, your agency name and retirement system number and name will appear. If your agency files multiple reports, when you change the employer number to work on a different report, the retirement system number and name will change accordingly.

There are three methods to transfer your payroll report file depending on the method of reporting.

There are three methods explained in this section to transfer a payroll report file. They are: (1) Electronic File Transfer (for current diskette or FTP reporters) (2) Copy from Previous Report Period (for current paper reporters) (3) Create New Report (for new agencies reporting for the first time).
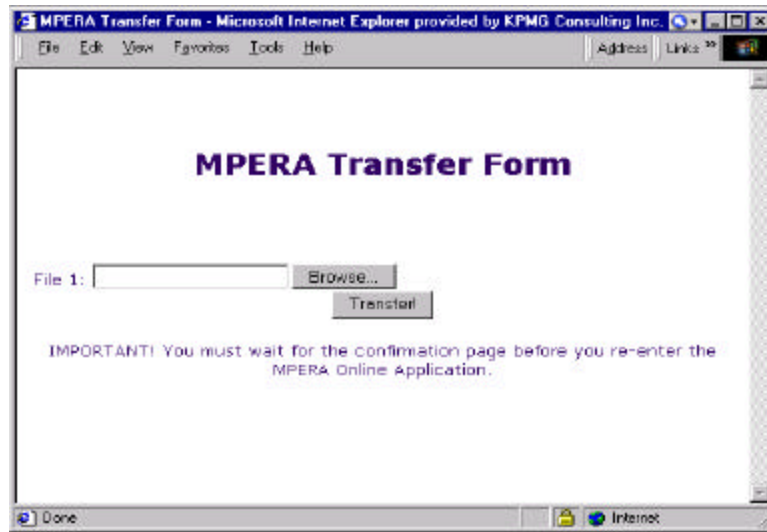
Electronic File Transfer:

The **Transfer Payroll File** Drop-down list provides access to the transfer and initial load of payroll files. Select the **Transfer File** from the drop-down list as shown below. If a user does not have access to any of the items in the Transfer Payroll File drop-down list, the list will be empty.

Electronic Reporting Method

Transfer Payroll File

You will use the following procedure to transfer your payroll file. Highlight **Transfer File** from the drop-down list and select **Go**.
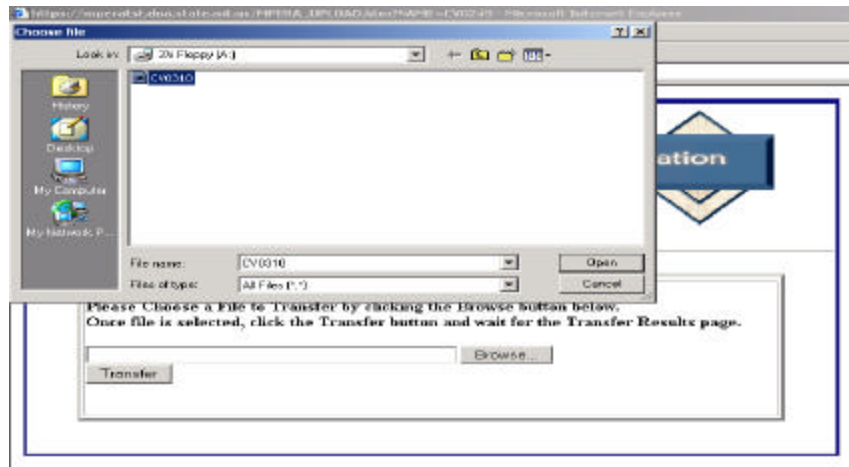
**MPERA
Transfer Form**

The next screen to be displayed is the MPERA Transfer Form.

To perform the payroll report file transfer:

1. Select the **Browse…** button.

2. Navigate through the directory structure and select the file for transfer. **Note: You will need to know where your electronic file is located on your PC or network**.

You will need to know where your electronic file is located to select it for transfer.

3. Choose the file by highlighting it. Then, right click on your mouse.

4. Rename the file to your USERNAME (in UPPERCASE) with a .txt in lowercase. (e.g. If your user name were WEB123P, the file you are uploading would need to be named WEB123P.txt.) Double click to select the file.

Rename the file to your USERNAME (in UPPERCASE) with a .txt in lower-case.
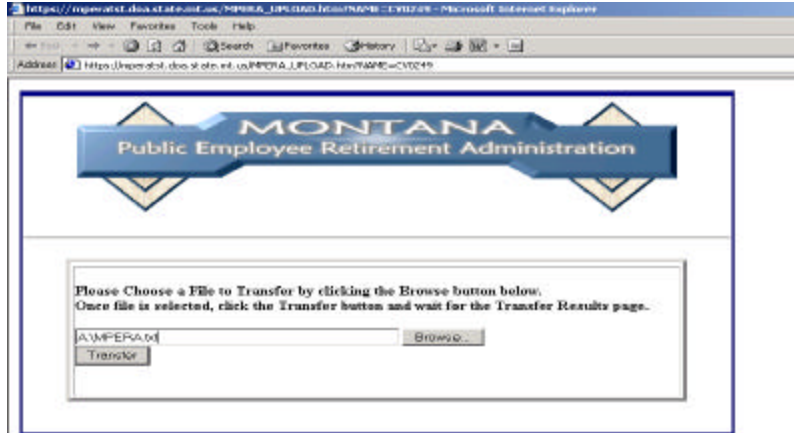
5. Select the **Transfer!** Button and wait for the MPERA Upload Results screen which confirms the files were transferred.


MPERA Upload Results
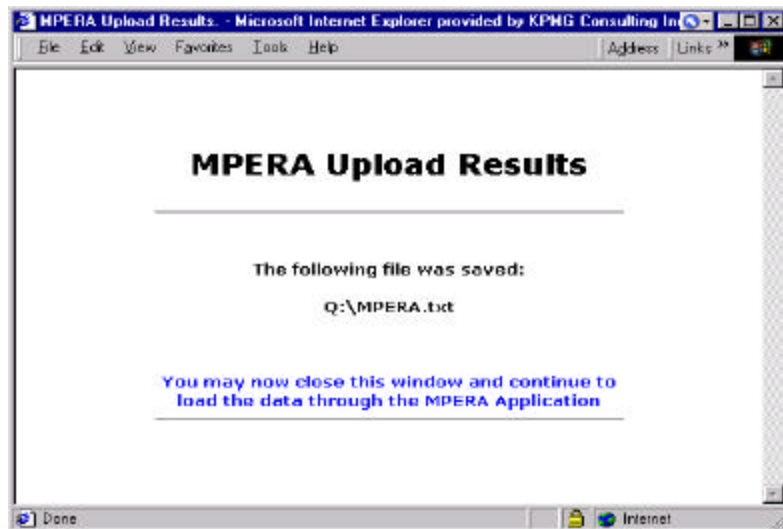
6. Close this window by selecting **File** and then **Close** from the menu bar or click on the "X" in the upper right hand of this window. This will take you back to the MPERA Online working screen.

When your file has been transferred and you are back to the MPERA Online working screen, you will need to load the file into the MPERA database. During this process, the system is looking for a file with USERNAME.txt. The file is run through procedures looking for any critical errors that may exist in the transferred file. To begin the load process go to the drop-down list in the **Transfer Payroll File** on the MPERA Online working screen.
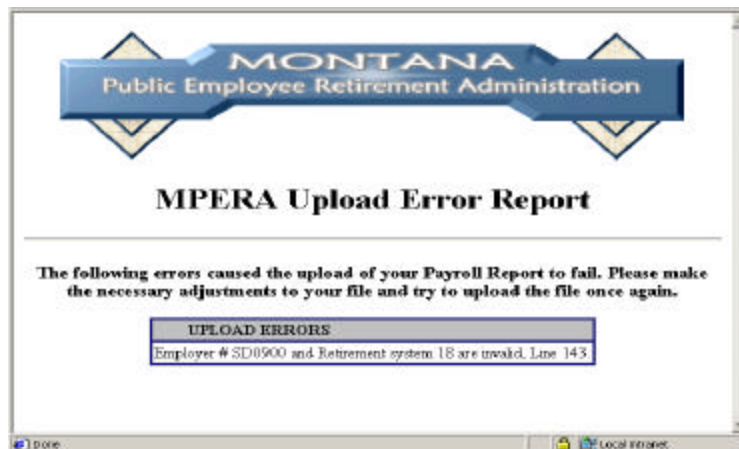
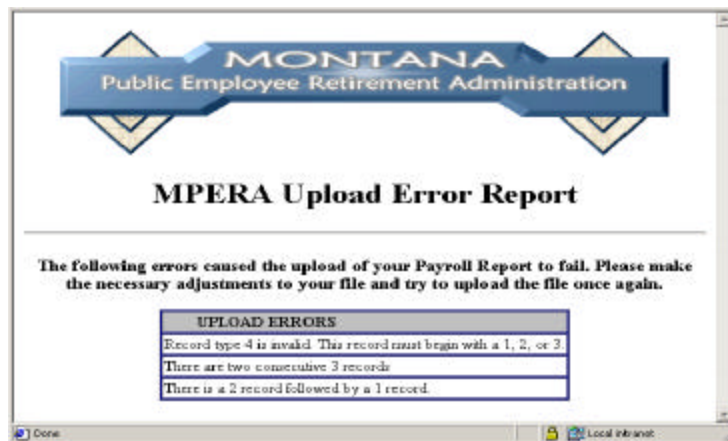*You will need to load the file into the MPERA database.*

Highlight **Load Data** and select **Go**.
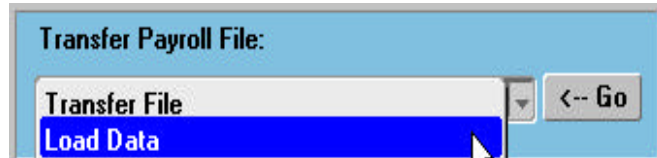
If there are any critical errors in the transferred file, an error report will be displayed. **All** of the critical errors must be corrected in your file before it can be loaded into the MPERA database.

Here are two sample error reports:

Sample Error Reports
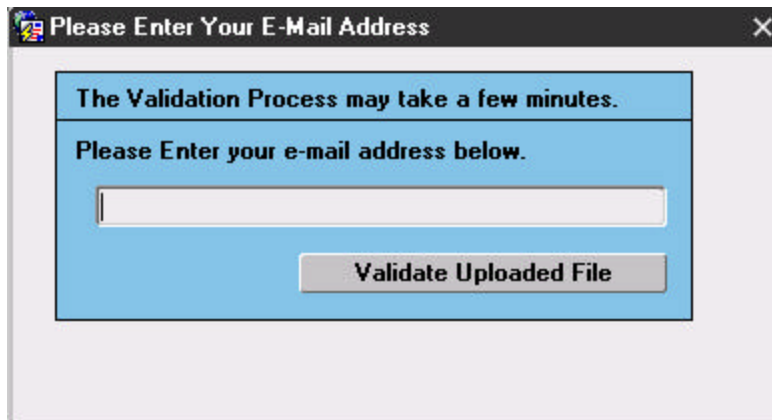
If there are no critical errors and the transferred file doesn't take very long to validate, the system will automatically load the file into the MPERA database and validate the information. Once the validation is complete, a window will appear stating **Validation Successful.** Select **OK** which will take you back to the MPERA Online working screen.

If you are a small agency (less than 500 employees), go to the next page for instructions to complete the payroll processing.

Instructions for agencies with large files:
(over 500 employees)

If there are over 500 employees, the payroll file will take some time to load. The following window will appear requesting an E-mail address. Enter your correct e-mail address and select the **Validate Uploaded File** button.
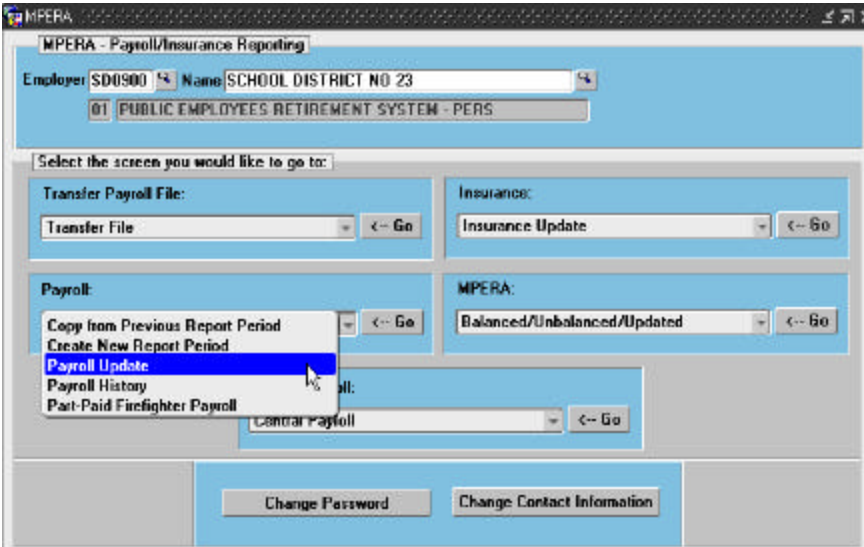
Validation of Uploaded File

Once the validation is complete, you will receive an e-mail from MPERA stating that your validation is complete. You may close the application and re-enter once you have received confirmation that the validation is complete.

Note: You will not be able to access the payroll file(s) information during the validation process.
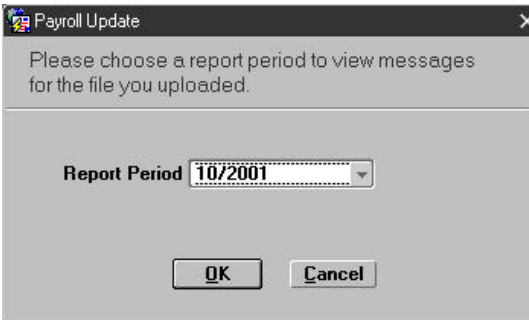
When you have received the e-mail message that your validation is successful, you will need to re-enter the system.

From the MPERA Online main working screen select the drop-down arrow for Payroll. Highlight **Payroll Update** from the drop-down screen and select **Go**.

Payroll Update List Item

This Payroll Update window is displayed.

The Report Period will default to the current payroll report period. Select **OK** and the payroll listing for the current report period will be displayed.

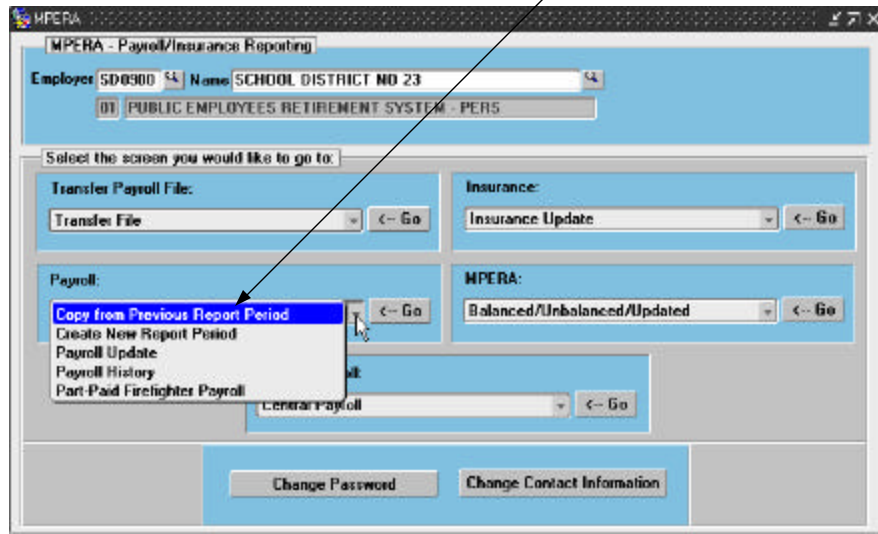Go to Section V, page I-4-29 for information on working the payroll.

Copy from Previous Report Period:

Agencies who currently report to the MPERA using a hard copy turnaround document will copy the data from the previously filed payroll report. (See Note in margin.) From the MPERA Online main working screen, select the drop-down arrow for **Payroll**. Highlight **Copy from Previous Report Period** list item and select **Go**.

Copy from Previous Report Period List Item

Note: If you upgrade to a vendor payroll package and a payroll file is produced, you will then use the Electronic File Transfer method to report your payroll. (See page I-4-16.)

When **Copy from Previous Report Period** is selected, and the **Go** button selected, the following window is displayed.
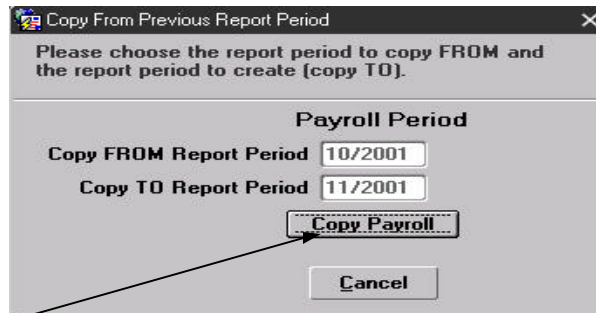
When you select the ***Copy Payroll*** *button it will bring up the Payroll Edit Listing screen.*

Based on the reports already filed with the MPERA, Copy FROM and the Copy TO (current report period) dates are displayed. Select the **Copy Payroll** button (it may take awhile to retrieve the information). This will bring up the Payroll Edit Listing screen which will have the information "from" the report month selected copied "to" the report period selected.

Go to Section V on page I-4-29 for information on working the payroll report.

Create New Report Period:

## Initial Payroll Report for Newly-Covered Agencies

Create New Report Period List Item

Note: New agencies will use this method to report the first payroll report. Subsequent reports will be entered by (1) Using the list item, **Copy from Previous Report Period** (See page I-4-22.); or (2) Electronic File Transfer. (See page I-4-16.)

Agencies not reporting for a report period need to create a new report period and click in "No File for Report Period."
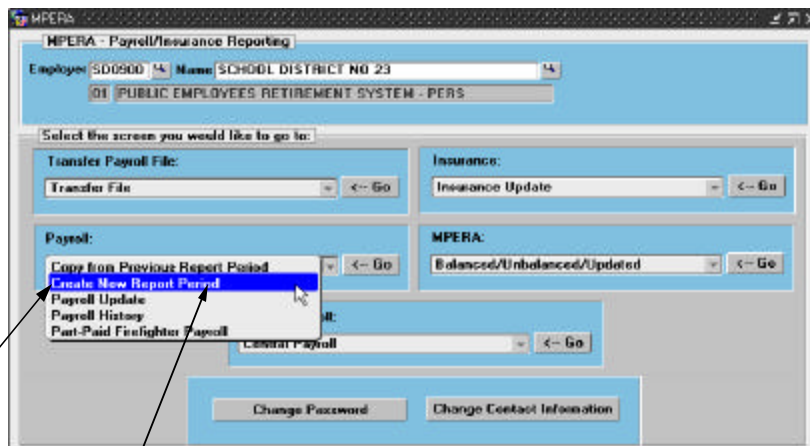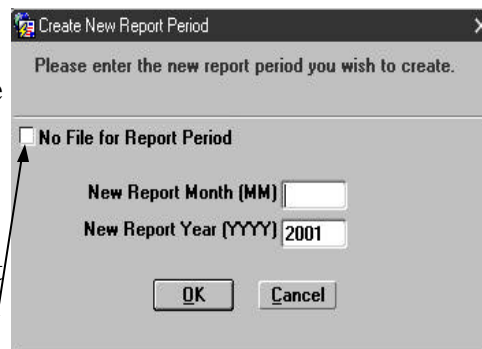
Highlight the list item **Create New Report Period** and select the **Go** button. This window is displayed:

Type in the New Report Month (MM) using the month number. (e.g., use 12 for December) to specify the report period you are creating. The year will appear as a default.

To create a report period for a year other than the default year, you may change the year. When the New Report Month has been entered, select the **OK** button. This will bring up the Payroll Update Screen. Go to Section V on page I-4-29 for information on working the payroll report.

User's not filing for a report period:
Some users, such as School Districts and Special Education Co-ops, do not have to file for some report periods. They are still required to create a report period for that month and specify they are not filing by selecting the **No File for Report Period** checkbox. Then, select the **OK** button.
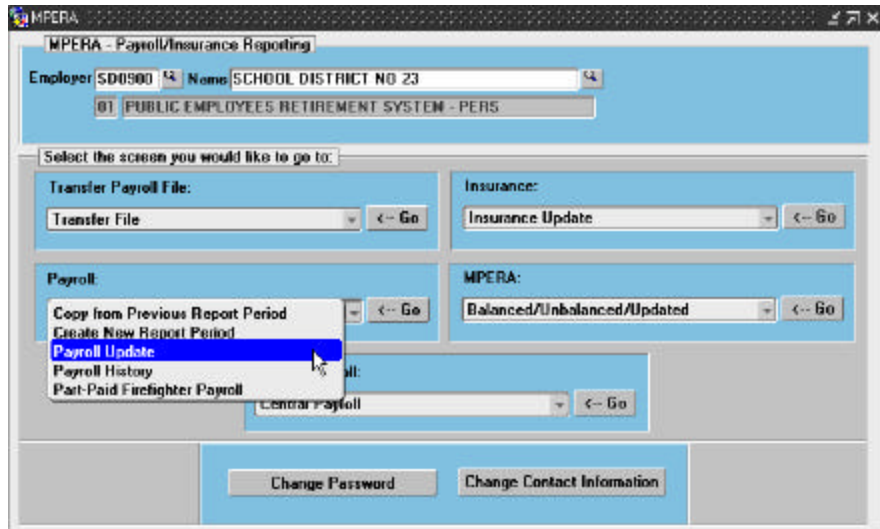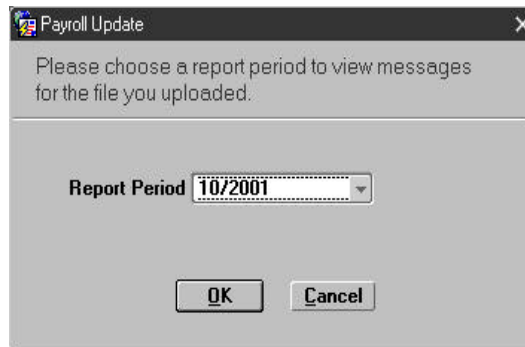
Section IV: Other Payroll List Items

Payroll Update List Item

The **Payroll Update** List item allows you to access, view, and modify an existing payroll report for the current report period.

Payroll Update List Item

Highlight the **Payroll Update** from the drop-down list and select the **Go** button. The following window is displayed:
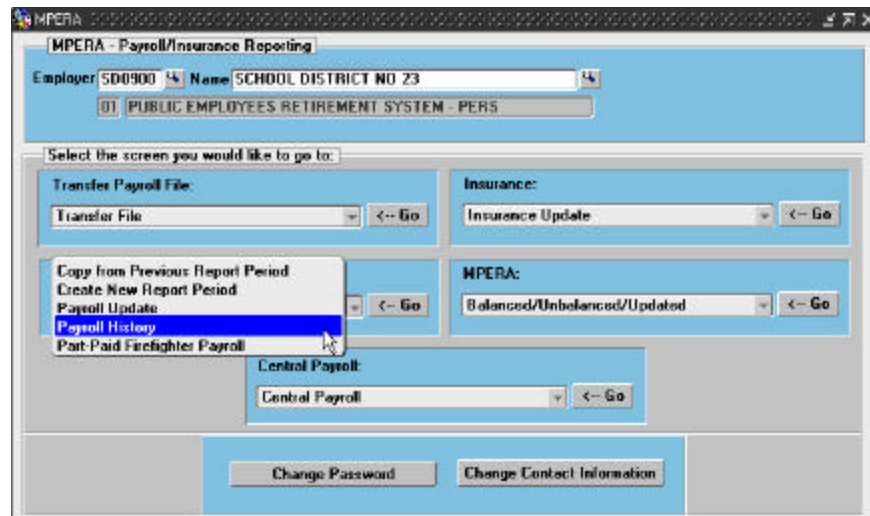

The Report Period will default to the current payroll report period. Select the **OK** button. This will take you directly to the payroll edit listing for the current report period.

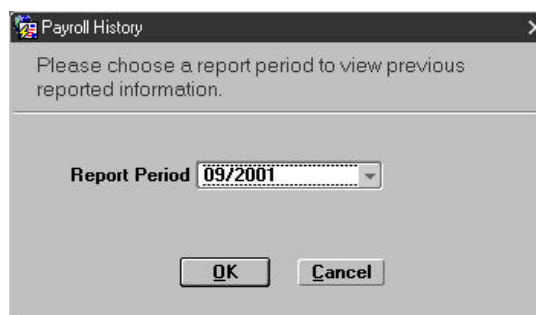Go to Section V, page I-4-29, for information on working the payroll report.

Payroll History List Item

The **Payroll History** list item allows you to access historical reports for inquiry only.

Once the **Payroll History** list item is selected you select the **Go** button and the following window is displayed:

Next, select a report period from the drop down list and the Payroll History screen will appear. This screen will list the payroll report from the specified report period. Select the **OK** button.

**Payroll History
Screen**

The **Payroll History** screen is used to view the payroll and contribution information by employer and retirement system for a prior report period. Data cannot be added, updated, or deleted. This screen gives the capability of viewing the data that was submitted, validated, and uploaded to the MPERA for a prior report period.

There are two tabs of information on this screen.

Payroll Report Tab

The **Payroll Report** tab is used to view the employee records. The items displayed within this tab include the Social Security Number (SSN), last name, first name, middle initial, termination checkbox, earnings, employee contributions, hours, zero-earnings checkbox, hourly rate, service purchase total, if applicable, and full/part time. A portion of the tab can be scrolled horizontally to access additional information about each record. The scroll bar located at the bottom of the list provides access to additional information for each member listed. Access to this information is gained by clicking on the scroll bar arrows or by dragging the bar to move horizontally. Information available in the Payroll Report block (in addition to that shown in the screen above) includes:
  - Position type (permanent, seasonal, temporary)
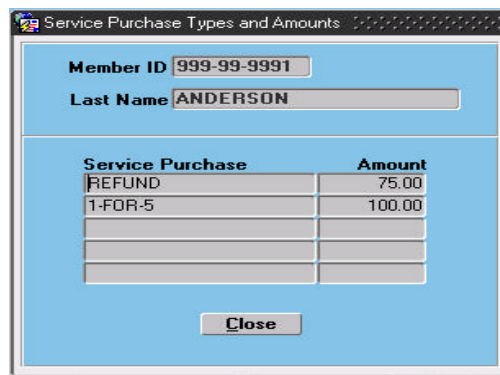 - Date of Hire.

You can search the records by SSN or Last Name in ascending or descending order.

The employee records will be sorted based on the SSN or on the last name by clicking the appropriate buttons at the top of the SSN and last name columns. (Clicking once or twice on the mouse alternates the sort order.) In addition, an employee record for a specific SSN or Last Name can be found by using the search function below the SSN and Last Name columns. To locate a record for a specific SSN,

enter the SSN (dashes are not required) in the field located above the **Find SSN** button and select this button. To search for a record based on the last name, enter the last name in the field located above the **Find Last Name** button and select the button. If a record is found with a SSN or last name that matches the value entered in the search field, focus will be placed on that record.

To view the detail information regarding a member's service purchase amount, click on the button located next to the Service Purchase Amount field. The Service Purchase Types and Amounts screen pops up. To go back to the Payroll History window, select the **Close** button.
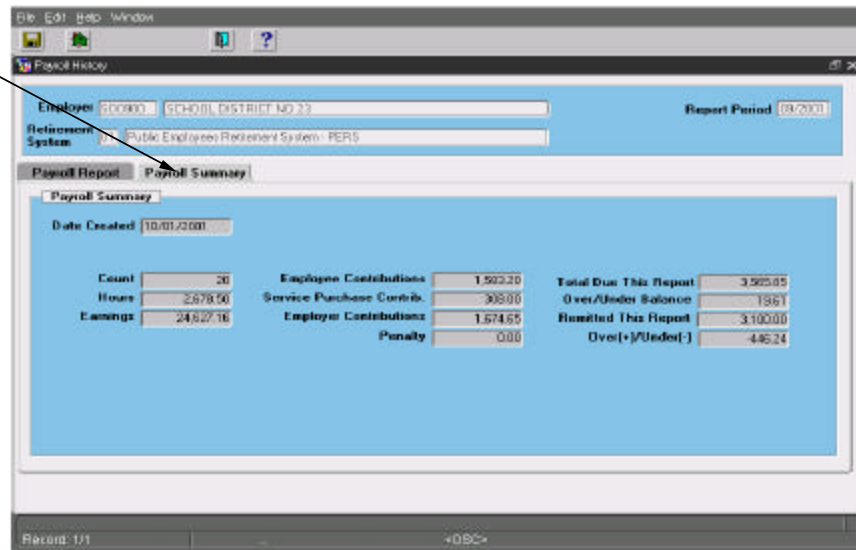

Payroll Summary Tab

The **Payroll Summary** tab is used to view the summary data for the payroll report.

To exit and return to the Main Screen, select the Home button located on the toolbar.

System Exit

To exit the MPERA Web Online system, entirely choose one of the following exit options:

- Select the "open door" button on the toolbar.
- Select the "X" button in the upper right corner of the screen.

3. Part-Paid Firefighter Payroll List Item

The Part-Paid Firefighter Payroll list item function is currently being developed.